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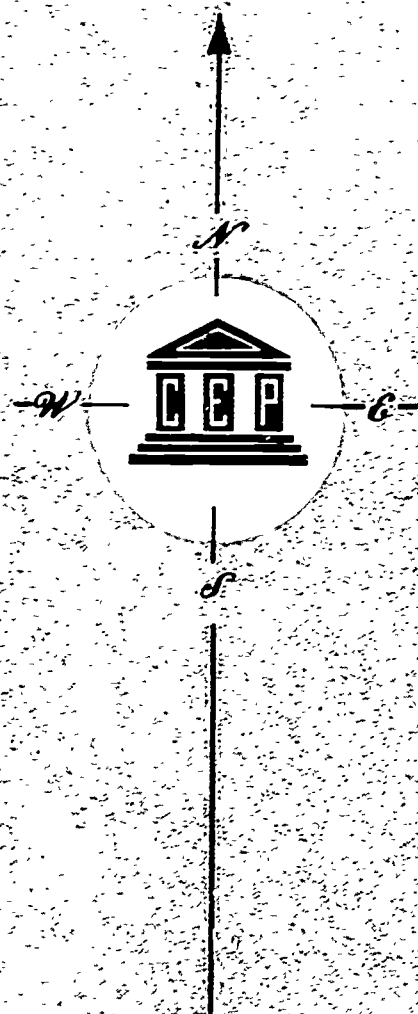
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This policy statement on vocational education was adopted by the State Council of Education on April 10, 1965. Vocational education should provide needed instruction in basic economics, the place of work in human affairs, the organization and management of work in contemporary society, the language and mathematics of work, the organization and self-determination of workers, the loyalties and attitudes of workers toward employment, and personal handling of money. The public school has the responsibility to make vocational education both attractive and respectable. The Commission feels that the following policy issues deserve notice--(1) All staff members should be aware of and take responsibility for the vocational development of students, among other growth objectives, (2) Vocational education should be included throughout the school program, (3) Instructional materials and procedures among school subjects should be mutually supportive, (4) Vocational teachers should feel themselves included in a pattern of joint instructional responsibility, and (5) The funds available for improving vocational education should go in all practicable ways into strengthening comprehensive schools and programs of instruction. (SL)

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# *Vocational Education in the Public Schools*

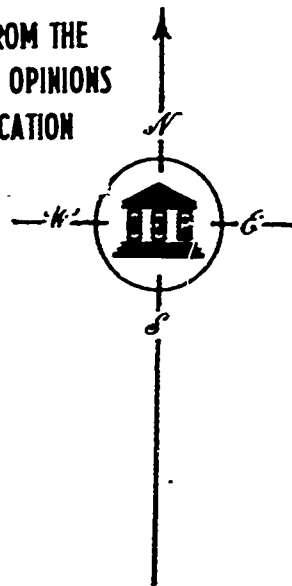
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**A Statement by the  
Commission on Educational Policy**

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*Vocational Education in the  
Public Schools*

A Statement by  
the Commission on Educational Policy of the  
California Teachers Association

Bulletin  
number

12

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## *Foreword*

The adoption by the California Teachers Association State Council of Education of a policy statement on vocational education comes at an opportune moment. Not only must the public schools examine anew the place of vocational instruction in the public school program, for there are many unknowns in the future of employment, but also a greatly increased emphasis and means for doing so will come from the 1965 Federal education legislation. Schools will have to steer an imaginative and bold course between obsolete, specific, job-related courses and a curriculum apparently so devoid of ordinary utility that a great proportion of students are repelled by its seeming uselessness. School drop-outs are as much a sign of futility as of some form of protest.

While there may not be anything more permanent than a temporary school building, there can be nothing so poorly founded in today's world as an inflexible policy. The Commission on Educational Policy and the State Council of Education will continue to study the many issues of vocational education as these relate the teaching profession to this essential role of the public schools. It is hoped that the present statement on vocational education is a wise beginning.

*Jack Rees*

*Acting Executive Secretary  
California Teachers Association*

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**A statement prepared by  
the Commission on Educational Policy  
of the California Teachers Association, and adopted by  
the State Council of Education  
on April 10, 1965**

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# *Vocational Education in the Public Schools*

There is a wealth of evidence to indicate an increase in the complexity of problems connected with work careers in our industrial and urbanized society. Three conspicuous aspects of the situation have significance particularly for the public school system: (1) the demand for unskilled labor is rapidly decreasing; (2) the skills needed in new kinds of work are increasing in sophistication; and (3) rapid changes in methods of production and service require frequent retraining. It is against this background of accelerating innovation and change that the Commission on Educational Policy comments on some of the responsibilities that now fall upon public schools. These have a more important role than ever before in arriving at solutions to the vexing problems of occupational citizenship. The Commission presents no original or unique policy statement on vocational education, nor does it attempt to summarize the literature on the topic. Instead it has simply enunciated what it believes to be a number of essential principles with which the education profession should be in accord and for which it will stand.

Schools  
And Work

## *Definition*

Vocational education, or occupational preparation, is instruction and experience included in the school curriculum for the particular purpose of adding to a student's capacity to obtain and hold a job or otherwise to produce an income for himself. Despite the broad applicability of general education, which all students should seek for itself, the school is obligated

✓ to add for a major portion of its graduates special studies leading to employability. That is, a part of the education of most students should be regarded *by definition* as vocational education. These studies can properly be identified as such without thereby either setting apart all other instruction as non-vocational or denying to occupational preparation the complementary support of the remainder of the school curriculum.

## *General and Vocational Training*

A good, illustrative example of the difficulty and uncertainty of educational definitions is supplied by the three terms liberal, general and vocational. The natural desire to be precise leads the user of the terms to want them and ensuing practices to be mutually exclusive. Actually, the educational purposes and content assumed in each category have much in common. A large portion of what a student acquires in liberal or general education will have relevance and use in his career as an income producer, so much so that there are advocates of general education as the only and proper training for all employment. Other persons point out that some information and skill desired for beginning workers simply never appears in general education without the specific stimulus of a vocational education premise.

Complementary  
Education

✓ The Commission urges that these <sup>various educat</sup> categories of schooling should be seen not as competitors but as complementary partners in an adequate education. More important than the labels the learning may bear is the fact that it must be as thorough as possible. ✓ Vocational education students are in need of a "mastery" of fundamental communication and computation skills and of general information. Bright minds in both vocational education and college preparatory groups need challenge and have much in common.

A broad concept of vocational education is desirable. It is commonly recognized that the high school



level will not attempt to prepare youth for specific jobs, for industry or business would itself prefer to do so and is increasingly willing and able to do so. But it is also necessary to recognize that the high school graduate who becomes a job seeker must have some job entry qualifications. The school has responsibility to help such students to be employable at graduation. The broad concept of vocational education will hold that for secondary school job candidates virtually every course of study is in a degree vocational, and classroom instruction will bear this in mind. It is even conceivable that learning for most students and its motivation will be found best in a work-oriented curriculum.

Initial  
Employment

## *Nature of Vocational Training*

Vocational education should presume to result for all students in needed instruction in basic economics, the place of work in human affairs, the organization and management of work in contemporary society, the language and mathematics of work at varying levels, the organization and self-determination of workers, the loyalties and attitudes of workers toward employment, and personal handling of money. Students will have to examine to a degree the great array of occupational opportunities, along with presently visible changes in the future of the over-all job spectrum. While it is true that the future of kinds of work cannot be accurately forecast, this uncertainty should not paralyze either students or schools into a fearful do-nothingness. School-counseled career choices will still have to be made and a beginning of entry level skills undertaken.

Vocational  
Studies

In favorable situations, school preparation for work can be accelerated and enlivened by work experience coordinated with classroom study, and such school practices should exist as widely as possible. Evidence supports the conclusion that this combination of formal schooling and work experience helps graduates to be more employable and successful on the job. Such in-

struction requires definite participation of the business community. The responsibility for the entrance of youth into employment extends beyond the schools, and all segments of management and labor must recognize the need.

## *Vocational Training in the Public School Structure*

Successful vocational education has long been identified with specialized departments in the comprehensive high school, and many secondary schools in recent years have abandoned an earlier designation as technical, or trade, or manual arts schools. With the growing realization that an essential accompaniment to vocational education for today's work is a thorough general education as well, it may be argued persuasively that the best possible high school for the broad objectives of vocational preparation is the comprehensive one.

All-  
Inclusive  
Schools

A recent legislative tendency to authorize and encourage separate vocational schools appears to run counter to experience with *adequate comprehensive high schools*. If the desired objective is availability of expensive training aids in centralized locations, this must be measured against the cost of either transporting students to school or housing them near schools. The question of economics and questions raised by the consequent segregation of vocational classes from the main stream of school experience must give pause to any hurried policy of separate vocational schools. It is recommended instead that more serious attention be given to the adequate financing of properly organized comprehensive schools.

It is increasingly apparent that the junior college will be the institution in which a large proportion of career training will occur. The original terminal education function of the junior college is neither obsolete nor diminishing in importance. The need for technical

competence in many career fields will require completion of numerous vocational programs two years beyond high school. This trend, in the view of the Commission, points to the comprehensive high school rather than the separate vocational high school, for there is strong likelihood of a growing proportion of high school graduates who will seek junior college admission. Further, the retraining programs which many persons will face throughout adult life will be lodged in the junior college. These tendencies suggest a long term coordination between junior colleges and comprehensive high schools, for it is apparent that much of the occupational experience to be offered in high school can be designed as pre-vocational, leading to junior college career curricula.

Junior  
College  
Level

One of the persistent handicaps with which vocational studies have to deal is the image of inferiority. It is not likely that separated vocational schools will improve this institutional image, unless they are glamorized at great expense into world's-fair-like technical centers. Such a school may be needed, but it would seem to be better justified at junior college level than at high school level.

## *Status Image of Vocational Education*

The public school system has the responsibility to make vocational education both attractive and respectable. In so doing it may find itself arrayed against a number of tendencies in our society and even within the total educational structure, but the school's commitment to the individual student and to equality of opportunity makes it imperative that the school resist the downgrading of vocational studies. In an interdependent, industrial society, excellence must be looked for in all walks of life and respected wherever found. The Commission believes that unfortunately a large number of capable youths turn away from desirable careers which they would find satisfying, and which would be of benefit to the nation, were it not for our society's attitude toward those vocations which do not

Status  
for  
Vocational  
Education

call for a full college education. /

The public school is in a unique position to reduce some existing prestige differentials among occupations, since a major factor in occupational prestige is the amount of schooling required for the work. This function will be difficult to perform in the face of a general downgrading of vocational education.

## *Vocational Education and the Teaching Profession*

Among the viewpoints growing out of the broad generalizations above, attention may be centered herewith on a few only. The following seem to the Commission to be deserving of notice:

Policy  
Issues  
Within  
Schools

1. All staff members should be aware of and take responsibility for the vocational development of students, among other growth objectives.

2. Staff coordination and planning should include vocational education throughout the school program. Vocational education should not be shunted into a separate and isolated sidepocket.

3. Instructional materials and procedures among school subjects, including those in vocational education, should be mutually supportive.

4. Teachers of all subjects should assume responsibility for high standards of student achievement not only in their own instructional specialty, but whenever their instruction and that of other teachers can be made mutually to benefit the student's development. Vocational teachers should feel themselves to be included in this pattern of joint instructional responsibility.

5. The funds available to be spent for the improvement of vocational education should go in all practicable ways into the strengthening of comprehensive schools and programs of instruction. The advancement of the status and the enhancing of the purposes of vocational education are to be achieved by including it in the mainstream of public education, not by removing it to isolated or scattered side channels.



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